<u>REMARKS</u>

Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested on the basis of the following particulars.

1. <u>In the claims</u>

As shown in the foregoing LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS, the claims have been amended to more clearly point out the subject matter for which protection is sought.

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claims 2 and 7.

Claims 2 and 7 are canceled, and the features thereof added to amended claim 1.

Claims 3-6, 8, and 9 are amended to depend from amended claim 1, instead of canceled claim 2 or 7.

Claim 31 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claim 35.

Claim 35 is canceled, and the features thereof added to amended claim 31.

Claims 36-38 are amended to depend from amended claim 31, instead of canceled claim 35.

Claim 46 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claim 52.

Claim 52 is canceled, and the features thereof added to amended claim 46.

Claim 53 is amended to depend from amended claim 46, instead of canceled claim 52.

Claim 55 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claim 60.

Claim 56 is canceled.

Claim 60 is canceled, and the features thereof added to amended claim 55.

Claims 61-63 are amended to depend from amended claim 55, instead of canceled claim 60.

Claim 64 is canceled.

Claims 10-30, 32-34, 39-45, 47-51, 54, 57-59 are left unchanged.

It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added, since the amendments merely merge the subject matter of previously presented claims, cancel claims, and change the dependencies of certain dependent claims in view of the cancelations.

Further, since the amendments merely merge allowable subject matter, cancel claims, and change the dependencies of certain dependent claims in view of the cancelations, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments clearly place the application in condition for allowance, and no new issues requiring additional consideration are raised by the amendments.

Therefore, entry of the LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS is respectfully requested in the next Office communication.

2. Rejection of claims 1-4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 20-34, 39-41, and 45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over German publication no. DE 10203035 (*Heim*) (U.S. patent no. 7,085,058 being utilized as a working English language translation)

This rejection is rendered moot by (1) the inclusion in amended claim 1 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 7, including the intervening subject matter of

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claim 2, claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, and 20-30 depending from amended claim 1; and (2) the inclusion in amended claim 31 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 35, claims 32-34, 39-41, and 45 depending from amended claim 31.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

3. Rejection of claims 5, 11, 12, 16-18, 42-44, 46-50, 54-59, and 64 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over German publication no. DE 10203035 (*Heim*) (U.S. patent no. 7,085,058 being utilized as a working English language translation) in view of WIPO publication no. WO 01/03945 (*Bonkowski et al.*)

This rejection is rendered moot by (1) the inclusion in amended claim 1 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 7, including the intervening subject matter of claim 2, claims 5, 11, 12, 16-18 depending from amended claim 1; (2) the inclusion in amended claim 31 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 35, claims 42-44 depending from amended claim 31; (3) the inclusion in amended claim 46 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 52, claims 47-50 and 54 depending from amended claim 46; (4) the inclusion in amended claim 55 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 60, claims 57-59 depending from claim 55; and (5) the cancelation of claims 56 and 64.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

4. Rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, 20-34, 39-41, and 45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WIPO publication no. WO 03/016073 (*Walter et al.*) (U.S. publication no. 2005/0001038 being utilized as a working English language translation)

This rejection is rendered moot by (1) the inclusion in amended claim 1 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 7, including the intervening subject matter of claim 2, claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, and 20-30 depending from amended claim 1; and (2) the inclusion in amended claim 31 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 35, claims 32-34, 39-41, and 45 depending from amended claim 31.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

5. Rejection of claims 11, 12, 16-18, 42-44, 46-51, 54-59, and 64 under 35 U.S.C. §
    103(a) as being unpatentable over WIPO publication no. WO 03/016073 (*Walter*)
    (U.S. publication no. 2005/0001038 being utilized as a working English language
    translation) as applied to claims 1 and 31 and further in view of WIPO publication
    no. WO 01/03945 (*Bonkowski et al.*)

This rejection is rendered moot by (1) the inclusion in amended claim 1 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 7, including the intervening subject matter of claim 2, claims 11, 12, 16-18 depending from amended claim 1; (2) the inclusion in amended claim 31 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 35, claims 42-44 depending from amended claim 31; (3) the inclusion in amended claim 46 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 52, claims 47-50 and 54 depending from amended claim 46; (4) the inclusion in amended claim 55 of the indicated allowable subject matter of claim 60, claims 57-59 depending from claim 55; and (5) the cancelation of claims 56 and 64.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

6.   Allowable subject matter

The applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 7, 8, 14, 19, 35-38, 52, 53, and 60-63 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claims 2 and 7; claim 31 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claim 35; claim 46 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claim 52; and claim 55 is amended to incorporate the features of previous dependent claim 60.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance.

7.   Conclusion

As a result of the amendment to the claims, and further in view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that every pending claim in the present application be allowed and the application be passed to issue.

Please charge any additional fees required or credit any overpayments in connection with this paper to Deposit Account No. 02-0200.

If any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephone or facsimile communication with the applicants' attorney, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers shown below.

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC   Respectfully submitted,
625 Slaters Lane, Fourth Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1176   /Patrick M. Buechner/
Phone: (703) 683-0500
Facsimile: (703) 683-1080

                                  PATRICK M. BUECHNER
Date: November 23, 2010   Attorney for Applicants
                                  Registration No. 57,504